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## SHORT COMMUNICATION

**Observations of some uncommon Dung Beetles**—*Geotrupes pyraeus* (Charpentier) (Geotrupidae) (Na) is locally abundant on Thursley NNR, Surrey (SU94), where it is regularly found near dog and horse dung along the bridleways and paths in late May and June. In 1998 a second emergence occurred in late August, when adults were again active and abundant on the 27th, and many dead and moribund individuals were picked up by Wendy Denton and Julia Fry on the 30th. This is the first time I have encountered this species in late summer, despite monthly visits to Thursley for over 10 years. It is intriguing that this should happen in a relatively poor summer, and not in any of the long series of warmer ones over the study period. A single specimen was picked up dead in the New Forest in August (Roger Booth, *pers. comm.*).

*Aphodius porcus* (Fab.) (Scarabaeidae) (Nb): I found a single female at Cholderton, N. Hants (SU2442) on 1.x.98. I excavated a *Geotrupes* burrow (probably made by *G. spiniger* (Marsham)) in an improved pasture field. The burrow went down at an angle of c.30° to a plug of moulded cow dung the size of a golf ball which was placed on the interface of the loose soil and hard chalk bedrock at c. 30 cm. On opening this dung I found a small round, pea-sized cavity in which was found the female *A. porcus* and the remains of a *Geotrupes* larva. This species has been reported as being a cuckoo parasite of *Geotrupes stercorarius* (L.) (Chapman, 1869, *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, **5**: 273–6), and may also overwinter in the burrows. *Geotrupes spiniger* was exceedingly abundant on the Cholderton Estate, with adults under most large dung pats, and a female *G. mutator* (Marsham) (Nb) was also found under 'sloppy' sheep dung.

Fox (*Vulpes*) and Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) pellets in the vicinity appeared to be made up almost entirely of the remains of *Geotrupes* adults.

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